Colleagues,

It is a somber issue that I introduce today, with the deaths this month of two dear colleagues.

Dr. Linda Moore died at her Massachusetts home after suffering with pancreatic cancer over the past year. Long-time colleagues will particularly recall her in her role here as Dean of the College of Fine & Applied Arts.

Shortly after the news of Dean Moore’s death, we learned that Dr. Paul Jacoway had died unexpectedly at his Akron home. The documentarian had just added the “Dr.” to his name and come home to Akron to spend a year teaching with us while he launched the next stage of his career.

Throughout the days to come, we will miss the leadership and talent of these colleagues in ways we can’t yet imagine.

In Memoriam: Dr. Linda Moore

On March 1, Dr. Linda Moore, former Dean of The University of Akron’s College of Fine & Applied Arts, has died at the age of 71. Dr. Moore came to The University of Akron in 1978, where she established herself as a long-time Communication colleague.

After leaving Akron, Dr. Moore became the dean of the College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts at Wayne State University in Detroit. She left Wayne State in 2003 to serve as vice president for academic affairs at Emerson College in Boston before retiring in 2013.

A full tribute to Dr. Moore can be found on the School of Communication homepage.

In Memoriam: Dr. Paul Jacoway

Dr. Paul Jacoway, 55, died unexpectedly at his home on March 9. He had returned to teach in the School of Communication after receiving his doctorate at Ohio University. Dr. Jacoway was a native of Akron who had established himself professionally as a documentarian. Later this semester, the School will plan a memorial screening of his award-winning documentary Final Edition: Journalism According to John S. and James L. Knight.

Tributes to Dr. Jacoway can be found at the School of Communication homepage.
Researchers in the School of Communication are starting to test their findings in their own classrooms.

Dr. Yang Lin, a professor in the School of Communication, has been teaching a variety of undergraduate and graduate-level communication courses since his arrival in 1997. One of the classes that he enjoys teaching is Communication Research, a 300-level course in which students learn how to use quantitative research methods to study communication.

Lin says he noticed that many undergraduates were struggling with this course, particularly in areas related to the quantitative research, and that the trend with this math-related anxiety seemed to continue throughout the years.

Dr. Andrew Rancer and Mr. James Durbin, who have also taught the Communication Research course, have been collaborating with Lin on a series of studies that looks into what might be behind students’ apprehension and their struggle with learning quantitative methods.

The third step in the research series will be to implement an idea they proposed at the end of their first study. Durbin plans to host an “intervention” in the School of Communication’s Communication Research courses this semester. As Lin describes the event, a math specialist will be coming into these classes to provide students with some techniques to help them conquer their math anxiety, something that has been found to greatly impact many students’ success in the course.

In the initial 2013 study, the trio measured Communication Research students’ perceptions of difficulty among 19 course topics. This first study also examined the relationship between the students’ self-reported levels of math anxiety and their perceived difficulty with and understanding of the topics covered in the course. The findings were that math anxiety is indeed related to how students perceive the difficulty and understanding of the 19 various course topics, and that students struggled most with topics related to statistics.

Lin, Durbin and Rancer then decided to investigate these findings further in a second study. In this recent study, perceived difficulty and understanding of the 19 topics were split between 11 “Research Methods and Measurement” topics and eight “Statistics” topics covered in the course.

In addition to measuring students’ levels of math anxiety, in this recent study the researchers included two more variables: students’ need for cognition and learning strategies. Math anxiety was once again found to lead to higher levels of perceived learning difficulty and to lower levels of content understanding.

This consistency showed the researchers that how anxious students are with regard to their mathematical skills is a key factor in how well they end up performing in the course. Lin, Durbin and Rancer’s second study has won them the top paper award in the Instructional Communication Division of the Eastern Communication Association, which they will accept at the ECA conference in Philadelphia this April.

As their award-winning second study gains more exposure in the scholarly community, the trio continues to finalize the plans for their third study: the math anxiety intervention. Dr. Lin says the intervention is planned to take place in the School of Communication’s undergraduate Communication Research courses after Spring Break.

- Leyna Chovan
ZIP SPOTLIGHT: JUDI CASH

For about two weeks out of the year, sap flows freely from the maple trees at Cash Farms, providing the sweet, sticky syrup necessary for a hot stack of pancakes or a huge Belgian waffle.

During these two weeks, Judi Cash, administrative assistant in the School of Communication, and her husband Jason, are busy collecting, producing and bottling maple syrup, as well as making various treats for sale at their shop.

Click here for a video tour of Cash Farms by Bob Vaia

Announcements & Reminders

• Rauslynn Boyd, graduate assistant in the School of Communication, presented her paper “Five-Hour Energy and the Protestant Work Ethic: An Ideological Criticism” as a panelist at the Third Annual Interdisciplinary Conference Culture & Environment on Thursday, March 5 at The University of Akron Student Union.

• The Speak Off will be held April 14 and the Speech Contest will be April 22 at the Quaker Square Grand Ballroom. The prizes will be: $1,000 for first place, $750 for Second, $500 for Third, $250 for Fourth, and $250 for Fifth. Those working the event will have an opportunity to win a gift card.

• Points of Pride Reminder: Let Brenda Reichert know of your former students who are working at the university, so she can add a “point of pride” to our campus map. While your thoughts are on alumni and you fondly recall others, please make her aware of them as well, even if they’re no longer on campus!

Spring 2015 Calendar

April 6: Final submission of theses to graduate school for Spring 2015 graduation
April 10: Noon faculty meeting
April 14: Speak-off
April 18: Spring Visit Day
April 22: Speech Contest
May 1: Noon faculty meeting
May 4-10: Final exams
May 10: Graduation (undergraduate ceremony): 10 a.m.
May 10: Graduation (graduate student ceremony): 2 p.m.

Faculty Matters Submissions

After a presentation, faculty should submit the presenter name/s, the title of the presentation and the venue at which it was presented. After a manuscript has been published, faculty should submit a copy of the article along with the bibliographic citation.

Corrections for the current issue along with new information intended for publication in future issues of Faculty Matters, should be emailed to Bob Vaia: rv38@zips.uakron.edu

The interim director takes full responsibility for any errors or omissions in this e-newsletter. Thank you!